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# OT 520 Foundations for Old Testament Study

Sandra Richter

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# OT 520

## Introduction to the Old Testament

Asbury Theological Seminary  
Spring 2001  
Tues/Thurs 2:30 -3:45 pm  
SH 230

**INSTRUCTOR:**

Professor Sandra Richter  
sandra\_richter@asburyseminary.edu  
SPO 933  
Office: 858-2032

**OFFICE HOURS:**

Tuesday 10:00-11:00 am  
Wednesday 2:30-4:00 pm  
Thursday 4:00-5:00 pm

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course is designed to lay a foundation for the rest of the student's seminary career by familiarizing the student with the amazing story of Redemption as told in the Old Testament. To accomplish this goal, the student will be exposed to the geographical and socio-historical context from which the Old Testament emerges; the content, historical flow and theological structure of the Old Testament; the genre and history of the Canon; and the scholarship which has sought for generations to understand this collection of Scripture. It is my hope that this class will provide the student with a **framework** for their study of the OT, while investing in each a profound excitement and respect for these sacred texts.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- 1) To become familiar with the history and geography of the biblical world in order to contextualize the OT narrative in real space and time.
- 2) To become familiar with the sociological structure of the biblical world in order to contextualize OT personalities within the relational structures from which they emerge.
- 3) To become familiar with the intentional theological structure of the OT in order to relate its message of redemption to that of the New.
- 4) To be exposed to issues of genre and authorship in order to facilitate future study and exposition of the text.
- 5) To engage the major questions of OT study and scholarship (historicity, canonicity, authorship) in order to equip the student to respond to these same questions for those they are called to serve.



## COURSE PROCEDURES & REQUIREMENTS:

### Method of Instruction:

The format of the class will be primarily lecture, augmented by visual presentations and small and large group discussion. Student responsibilities will include a careful **reading** of a broad selection of materials, both in the required and recommended texts, and in the Course Packet.

### Textbooks:

The required and recommended texts are on reserve in the library. These textbooks and a Course Packet are available for purchase at the bookstore. The materials in the **Course Packet** are also on reserve at the circulation desk and may be checked out to either copy or read. There will be numerous **handouts** for this class which will be distributed *once* in class, and always available on the Intranet.

#### Required

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form and Background of the OT*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996).

James B. Pritchard, ed. *The HarperCollins Concise Atlas of the Bible* (HarperSanFrancisco, 1997).

Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel Its Life and Institutions in the Biblical Resource Series* (Grand Rapids: Wm B Eerdmans/Livonia: Dove Book Sellers, 1997).

WJ Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation: A Theology of OT Covenants* (Paternoster Press, 2000 [1984]).

#### Recommended

Jon Levenson, *Sinai & Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (HarperSanFrancisco, 1985).

David Baker & Bill Arnold, eds., *The Face of Old Testament Studies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999).

Brevard S. Childs, *OT Theology in a Canonical Context* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985).



## REQUIREMENTS

**20% QUIZZES.** *Each* Tuesday students will be *briefly* quizzed on assigned reading. Of these quizzes, the lowest grade will be dropped. There will be no make-ups. In addition, most of the quizzes will have an “extra” question drawn from the recommended readings. Students will be able to gain 5 additional percentage points over the course of the semester by correctly answering these “extra” questions.

**10% BOOK REVIEW.** A three-four page book review of Jon Levenson’s *Sinai & Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* is due **by Friday, 4/20 at 5:00 pm**. This review should answer the following three questions: (1) What is the content of this book?; (2) How does this content interact with other course material?; (3) What is the student’s response to the information and arguments presented in this book? This book review must be well-written, presented in standard form, clean and critical. Reviews received after the posted hour will be penalized half a grade per day, weekends included! Further instructions are available in “How to Write a Book Review” on the e-mail desktop page under “Resources” and on the Intranet.

**30% MIDTERM EXAM.**

**40% FINAL EXAM.**

**GROUPS.** *Most* Thursdays we will break into small discussion groups in order to evaluate some aspect of the assigned reading and synthesize it with class material. Attendance in these groups will be recorded. Each absence from the Thursday discussion groups will result in the deduction of 2 percentage points from your final evaluation. Although not required, it is strongly suggested that students use the to-be-distributed course list to form study and discussion groups in order to provide further opportunity to process and interact with course material.

**PRESENCE**, preparedness and participation are always expected. Class absences will be considered in your final evaluation.

\*Remembering that “A” work is defined at Asbury as “Exceptional work: outstanding or surpassing achievement of course objectives” (Asbury Catalog, p. 28), know that to score an “A” on the midterm and final exam the student must show evidence of having critically synthesized reading material and class presentations and must display familiarity with the bulk of the recommended readings.



## READING & LECTURE SCHEDULE

# Part I: The Big Picture

### 2/6 INTRODUCTION & THE BIBLE AS THE STORY OF REDEMPTION

#### 2/8 THE OT IN TIME & SPACE

De Vaux, pp. 3-61, "Nomadism & Family Institutions"

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, "Geography," pp. 619-631

Atlas, pp. 8-13, 36, 60-61

**Recommended:** Lawrence Stager, "The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel" *BASOR* 260 (1985): 1-35.

#### 2/13 THE CONCEPT OF COVENANT

quiz

M. Weinfeld, "tyrb *q<sup>m</sup>* *□* *⊗* *⚡*," *TDOT*, pp. 253-79 (\*265-276)

Frank Cross, "Kinship and Covenant in Ancient Israel" in *From Epic to Canon*, pp. 3-22

Kenneth Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament*, 90-102.

**Recommended:** "The ANE Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy," *CBQ* 25 (1963):77-85.

#### 2/15 MORE ON COVENANT

"The Book of the Covenant" Exodus 19:1-23:19

Deuteronomy 1:1-6:25; 28:1-30:20; Isaiah 1:1-31; Jer 34:18-20

**Recommended:** Deuteronomy 6:26-34:12 (i.e. the rest of Deuteronomy)

56 LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, "Deuteronomy," pp. 111-127

#### 2/20 GOD'S ORIGINAL INTENT: EDEN

quiz

Genesis, chapters 1-4, Psalm 8

Henri Blocher, "Approaching Genesis" and "The Week of Creation" in *In the Beginning*, pp. 15-59

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 15-31, "Genesis: Primeval Prologue"

**Recommended:** *ANET*, "The Mesopotamian Creation Epic," pp. 31-39

Childs, "Male & Female as a Theological Problem," 188-192

#### 2/22 GOD'S FINAL INTENT: THE NEW JERUSALEM

Exodus 24:12-26:37 (looking for *cherubim*)

Ezekiel 47:1-12 (if this is the first time you've read Ezekiel, read a summary of the book and this particular section of the book in a Bible handbook, Eerdmans is excellent)

Revelation 19:11-22:21

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, "The Authority of the OT," "Revelation," "Canon," pp. 585-605

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#### 2/27 NOAH

quiz

Genesis 5:1-11:32

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 32-51, "Genesis: Patriarchal History"

Atlas, 58-59

Dumbrell, "The Covenant with Noah," pp. 11-43

**Recommended:** *ANET*, "The Gilgamesh Epic," pp. 40-75

3/1      **ABRAHAM**

Genesis 12:1-36:43

Atlas, 14-17

Dumbrell, "The Covenant with Abraham," pp. 47-79

Childs, "The Recipients of God's Revelation," 92-103

**Recommended:** Weinfeld, "The Covenant of Grant in the OT and in the ANE," *JAOS* 90 (1970): 184-203

3/6      **MOSES**

**quiz**

Genesis 37, 39-41, 47:1-Exodus 18:27

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 63 -79, "Exodus: Message"

Atlas, pp. 34-35, "Exodus & Wanderings"

Childs, "The Theological Significance of the Decalogue," pp. 63-83, *OT Theology in a Canonical Context*

**Recommended:** Dumbrell, "The Sinai Covenant," pp. 80-126

3/8      **EXCURSUS: THE TABERNACLE: "So that I may dwell among them..." Exodus 25:8**

Exodus 24-34 (some review here)

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, 80-98, "Leviticus"

Childs, pp. 155-172, "Benefits of the Covenant: the Cultus"

**Recommended:** de Vaux, pp. 274-311: "Semitic Sanctuaries," "The First Israelite Sanctuaries"

3/13      **DAVID**

**quiz**

1 Samuel 16:1-2 Samuel 12:31

Atlas, pp. 46-51, "The Kingdom of Saul," "David's Rise to Power," "David's Consolidation"

Dumbrell, "The Covenant with David," pp. 127-163

**Recommended:** Childs, pp. 108-119, "Agents of God's Rule: Moses, Judges, Kings"

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3/15      **THE NEW COVENANT:**

G.R. Osborn, "Type, Typology," pp. 1117-19

Scott Hafemann, *Paul, Moses and the History of Israel*: "The Meaning of the 'New Covenant' in Jeremiah 31," pp. 129-40

Dumbrell, "The New Covenant," 164-200

Matt 1:1-3:17; 21:1-11

Gal 2; 3:15-29

Luke 1

1 Corinthians 15

John 1:1-34; 14:1-7

Hebrews, chptrs 9-11

**Recommended:**

Jon Levenson, *The Death & Resurrection of the Beloved Son*, pp. 1-17; \*25-31

N.T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 231-257

3/20      **MIDTERM EXAM**

## Part II: Close Ups

### 3/22 **THE PENTATEUCH: STRUCTURE & AUTHORSHIP**

The Book of Numbers

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 3-14 "Pentateuch"

"JEDP-in-a-nutshell" Handout

Frank M. Cross, "The Priestly Work," *Canaanite Myth & Hebrew Epic*, pp. 291-324

**Recommended:** *Face*, pp. 116-144, "Pondering the Pentateuch: The Search for a New Paradigm"

### 3/27 **THE PATRIARCHS**

quiz

Genesis 25:1-37:36

W.F. Albright, "The Patriarchal Background of Israel's Faith," *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, 53-91

K. Kitchen, "The Patriarchal Age: Myth or History?" *BAR* (March 1995): 48-57; 88-95

[**Review** Atlas, pp. 14-21, "Abraham's Migration" etc; LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 32-51]

**Recommended:** LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, "The Chronological Puzzle," 632-640

J. Hackett, "Women's Studies & the Hebrew Bible," 141-163.

### 3/29 **THE EXODUS: MYTH OR HISTORY?**

Reread Exodus 13:1-19:6

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 52-62 "Exodus: Historical Background"; pp. 641-57 [skim 658-87]

"Archaeology";

Kevin D. Miller, "Did the Exodus Never Happen?" *Christianity Today* 42/10 [Sept 1998]: 44-51

Atlas, pp. 18-21, *review* p. 34

**Recommended:** J. Hoffmeier, "Egypt, Plagues in" *ABD* 2:374-78

de Vaux, "Slaves," pp. 80-90

### 4/3 **THE DEUTERONOMISTIC HISTORY: STRUCTURE & AUTHORSHIP**

quiz

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 131-137 "Former Prophets"

Frank Cross, "The Themes of the Book of Kings and the Structure of the Deuteronomistic History,"

*Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, pp. 274-289.

Review Deuteronomy chptrs 1-4; Joshua chapters 1, 12 (summary of conquest battles) and 23; Judges 2:11-23; 1 Samuel 12; 1 Kgs 8:12-51; 2 Kgs 17 (the peroration of Samaria); 2 Kgs 22 & 23 (Josiah's reform), 25 (the fall of the southern kingdom).

**Recommended: :**

*Face*, "Historiography of the OT," pp. 145-75

### 4/5 **THE CONQUEST & SETTLEMENT: THE ERA OF THE JUDGES & THE TRIBAL LEAGUE**

The Books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth

Atlas, pp. 38-45, "Conquests," "Occupation," etc.

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 138-164 "Joshua" "Judges"

de Vaux, pp. 91-98, "The Israelite Concept of State"

**Recommended:** Wm. Dever, "Is There Any Archaeological Evidence for the Exodus?" in *Exodus: The Egyptian Evidence*, pp. 67-86

**READING WEEK, April 9-13**

4/17 **THE RISE OF THE UNITED MONARCHY & ISRAEL'S GOLDEN AGE**

quiz

1 Kings 1:1-9:9

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, 165-196 "Birth of Monarchy," "Golden Age"

"David Found at Dan" *BAR* 20/2 (March/April 1994): 74-87

de Vaux, pp. 312-330, "The Temple at Jerusalem"

Atlas [review pp. 48-51], pp. 52-57, "The Economy of Solomon's Kingdom," etc.

**Recommended:**

Philip Davies, "'House of David' Built on Sand," 54-55.

Anson Rainey, "'House of David' and the House of the Reconstructionists," 47.

de Vaux, "The Temple at Jerusalem," pp. 331-344

4/19 **THE POETS & SAGES OF ISRAEL: THE BOOK OF PSALMS & THE WISDOM LITERATURE**

Psalms: 1, 2, 3, 8, 44, 46, 73, 88, 95, 96, 111, 150 (note divisions of five Books)

Proverbs: 1, 2, 3. 22:17-23:11 (note ANE parallels), 30, 31

reviews due on Friday

Ecclesiastes

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 231-242 "Hebrew Poetry"; pp. 447-459 "Wisdom Literature"

*Face*, "Wisdom Lit" 295-328

**Recommended:** LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 460-519 (read selectively)

4/24 **THE DIVIDED MONARCHY**

quiz

1 Kings 11:1-22:53 (Ahijah & Elijah); 2 Kgs 18-23:27 (Hezekiah, Manasseh & Josiah)

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 197-220, "The Divided Monarchy"

de Vaux, pp. 100-137, "The Person of the King," etc.

**Recommended:** *Face*, "The Historical Study of the Monarchy: Developments & Detours," pp. 207-235

4/26 **THE OFFICE OF THE PROPHET:**

**Reread:** Deuteronomy, chptrs 13 & 18

**Read:** LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 221-230 (see chart, pp. 224-226); 243-269.

Childs, "The Office & Function of the Prophet," pp. 122-142

[Review *TDOT*, "tyrb," pp. 276-279]

5/1 **THE WRITINGS OF THE PROPHETS: CONTENT & HERMENEUTICS**

quiz

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 289-312; 328-355

Hosea chapters 1-4; **Hosea**

Isaiah 1, 3-9:7, 36-38, 40: **Isaiah**

Jeremiah chapters 1-5; 7 and 31 (cf. Hebrews chptrs 8 & 9): **Jeremiah**

**Recommended:** YHWH's prophets sent to Assyria: Jonah & Nahum

5/3 **THE COLLAPSE OF THE MONARCHY & THE EXILIC COMMUNITY: DANIEL & EZEKIEL**

\*Malamat, "Caught Between the Great Powers: the Fall of Judah" *BAR* (July/Aug 1999): 34-41, 64

Atlas, pp. 88-89, "Nebuchadnezzar"

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, "Ezekiel," "Daniel," "356-369; 566-582"

Ezekiel chptrs 1-3, 10

Daniel chptrs 1-4, 7

**Recommended:** *Face*, "Recent Studies in OT Apocalyptic," 369-390

5/8 **THE CHRONICLER'S HISTORY: THE RETURN & RESTORATION OF THE POST-EXILIC COMMUNITY**

quiz

1 Chronicles chptrs 1-14, 23; 2 Chron 1, 9, 36; Ezra chptrs 1-6; Nehemiah 8-9

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 532-565, "Chronicler," "Ezra-Nehemiah," "Esther"

Atlas, pp. 90-91, "The Persian Empire"

**Recommended:** *Face*, "The Exile & After: Historical Study," pp. 236-265



5/10     **THE INTERTESTAMENTAL PERIOD & CONCLUSIONS**

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, "Formation of the Old Testament," pp. 606-618

Atlas pp. 92-103; 1 & 2 Maccabees (read selectively)

Dumbrell, "Epilogue," pp. 201-206

**Recommended:** de Vaux, pp. 372-404 (the priesthood before & after the Temple)

**FINAL EXAM:** 12:30-2:30 pm, Monday, May 14th